

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS ABUJA 000592

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

USDA FOR FAS/OA, FAS/DLP, FAS/ICD AND FAS/ITP
USDA ALSO FOR APHIS
USAID REGIONAL HUB OFFICE ACCRA
CHERYL FRENCH APHIS DAKAR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [EAID](#) [AMED](#) [EAGR](#) [NI](#) [AVIANFLU](#)

SUBJECT: MAR 15 NIGERIA AVIAN FLU UPDATE -- LAGOS OUTBREAK

REF: ABUJA 576

1. (SBU) Summary. The Lagos State agriculture commissioner said on March 14 that a commercial poultry farm in Iju, Lagos State, near the border with Ogun State, reported a suspected outbreak of AI. He said the outbreak likely was H5N1. The GON's chief veterinary officer later confirmed the outbreak and said 12,000 birds were being culled at the Iju farm. The GON held a news conference on March 13 at the presidential villa banquet hall to review the GON's response to AI in the period Feb. 8-March 8. The information minister said repeatedly that Nigeria's AI outbreak was not a spreading epidemic, but rather AI was appearing at multiple locations -- where he alleged the GON is stamping out the virus effectively. That description is not really an accurate portrayal of AI in Nigeria. End summary.

2. (U) The Lagos State agriculture commissioner told the agricultural attache on March 14 that a commercial poultry farm in Iju, Lagos State, near the border with Ogun State, reported a suspected outbreak of avian influenza (AI). Government of Nigeria (GON) and state animal- and human-health officials visited the farm and began culling operations, but additional resources were desperately needed, including disinfectant and logistical support, the commissioner said. All indications point to H5N1, according to the official. Samples had been sent to the Vom National Veterinary Research Institute. The commissioner was requesting resources from the GON. Public-health officials visited the farm and examined workers, but observed no human cases of AI. The agricultural attache spoke March 15 with the GON's chief veterinary officer, who confirmed the outbreak and said 12,000 birds were being culled at the Iju farm.

GON news conference denies AI's continued spread

3. (SBU) The GON held a news conference on March 13 at the presidential villa banquet hall to review the GON's actions against AI during the 30 days ending on March 8 since the H5N1 virus was diagnosed in Nigeria. David Nabarro, the UN coordinator for avian and human influenza, attended. The statement by the Nigerian minister of information was largely accurate in its daily accounting of AI events in Nigeria, but downplayed the continued spread of AI in Nigeria. The minister suggested the AI virus in Nigeria was more lethal to commercially raised poultry than to local free-range chickens. There is no data to confirm that. The minister said repeatedly that Nigeria's AI outbreak was not a spreading epidemic, but rather was AI appearing at multiple locations -- where he alleged the GON was stamping out the virus effectively. The minister emphasized strongly that the GON was investigating whether illegally imported chickens caused the AI outbreak in Kano State -- thus seeking to justify the GON's import ban on chickens and breeding stock. (Comment: The mission is concerned by GON officials' providing inaccurate information to the public about the threat and spread of AI. End comment.)
CAMPBELL